

Bilingual Beyond School: Students' Language Ideologies in Bilingual Programs in South-Central Spain¹

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Abstract: This article examines adolescent and late adolescent discourses on bilingualism, bilingual education and the role of English and other additional languages in the current out-of-school lives and future trajectories of Spanish students enrolled in bilingual education programs. The data is part of a larger critical sociolinguistic ethnographic project on the implementation of bilingual education programs in secondary education (organized as English-Spanish CLIL) in Castilla-La Mancha, a region in South-Central Spain. Discourses were mainly elicited through a series of workshop-type and group discussion activities held in classrooms from two semi-private and two public schools, as well as an additional focus group conducted with university students. In total, 12 group events, involving approximately 300 students, were organized and documented through video-recordings, audio-recordings, photographs and fieldnotes. Students' language ideologies around bilingualism are examined through an inductive qualitative / grounded theory approach. Three themes are identified: (a) the definition of bilingualism and bilingual competence, (b) the place of English (and other additional languages) in students' current lives and social experiences and; (c) the role assigned to English in future employment and mobility opportunities. These discourses are discussed in relation to recent critical sociolinguistic work on the interconnection between language, multilingualism and neoliberalism. The paper closes with some methodological thoughts regarding the place of linguistic ethnography in the analysis of students' collective discourses.

Keywords: Bilingual Education; Language Ideologies; Adolescent Students; Linguistic Ethnography.

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1. Introduction

The implementation of immersion type or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) educational programs (Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter, 2014) is arguably one of the few, if not only, educational reform effort and pedagogical innovation developed in Spain that seems to have broad support across Spanish regions (i.e. Spanish Autonomous Communities with control over educational policies and programs), the political spectrum in regional governments and is consistently demanded by families and students at all levels of the Spanish educational system. Within Spanish educational politics, this consensus could be seen as surprising given the history of political and ideological tensions in relation to practically every other major educational issue (Marchesi, 2000). Admittedly, critical voices have emerged in recent years (Roncero, 2018), but a closer look at these analyses suggests that the major concerns are around issues of equity and how the «bilingual educational programs» foster tracking and exclusionary practices within schools. Thus, the challenge is not so much on the extension of a CLIL-type curriculum, but on how this possible extension can be achieved while guaranteeing and extending equal educational opportunity (cf. Mijares and Relaño-Pastor, 2011). Even these critical sources acknowledge that the implementation of these linguistic programs respond to the socio-educational imperatives of globalized labor and economic markets together with European integration, which require multilingual students/citizens, and in which English, for better or worse, has the leading role (De Castro, 2014).

The research base supporting and assessing CLIL programs in Spain stems primarily from quantitative applied linguistics research focused on measuring and comparing an array of language competence variables (Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter, 2014; Pérez-Cañado, 2016). In this context, there is very little research that adopts an ethnographic and/or critical sociolinguistic perspective on the development and implementation of English CLIL programs in Spain (Codó and Relaño-Pastor, in press), particularly in «monolingual» autonomous communities that have very little tradition in the implementation of bilingual education or handling more than one co-official language. A critical sociolinguistic perspective situates the development of CLIL programs and the privileged position of English through bilingual educational programs within the extension of a neoliberal economic, political and educational social order [e.g. Heller (2010); Holborow (2015); McKinney (2017); Phillipson (2011); Piller and Cho (2013); Relaño-Pastor (2018)]. From this perspective, central questions do not gravitate so much towards assessing and examining instructional designs or measuring linguistic outcomes in students but on critically unpacking the assumptions behind educational arrangements and pedagogical and communicative practices that put English (L2) as the medium of instruction at the center of schooling. In addition, a critical perspective is aware that neoliberal discourses penetrate educational practices and policies in complex and apparently contradictory ways – and perhaps more so in the European context, in which the dynamics of economic, political and socio-cultural integration are not necessarily perceived to work in synchrony [e.g. Flores (2013)]. Thus, the task of an ethnographically-informed analysis (Copland, Cresse, Rock and Shaw, 2015)

is to uncover and situate some of these tensions and re-construct broader social discourses and ideologies (Blommaert, 2005) from the fragments of daily practice.

In this context, very little research on CLIL programs in Spain has turned its attention to students' discourses and perceptions about bilingualism and bilingual education (cf. Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2009; Oxbrow, 2018). Neoliberalism is a project that rests on the (re)construction of particular types of subjects and subjectivities (Foucault, 1988; Harvey, 2007; Heller and McElhinny, 2017; Holborow, 2015); thus, examining how students are situated within these discourses, how students incorporate ideas about bilingualism or English into their repertoires and worldviews and how participating in bilingual education programs shapes students' linguistic and social identities would seem central research questions in the examination of the implementation and extension of «bilingual education» in Spain and elsewhere. This article begins to address this gap by focusing on students' beliefs and discourses on what it means to be bilingual, the affordances of bilingualism and English in their lives and the role they attribute to competence in additional languages in their future life trajectories. These beliefs are understood as language ideologies [e.g. Kroskrity (2004, 2010); Makoe and McKinney (2014)], as culturally-shaped systems of ideas connecting language and the social, including moral and political interests, that potentially play a mediating role in the structuration of social life (Irvine, 1989). Further, as Kroskrity (2004) points out, language ideologies are not necessarily fully articulated and internally coherent discourses, but, rather, multiple and fragmented systems that vary along different socio-cultural groups – which are, in turn, internally diverse –, are enacted by speakers with different degrees of awareness, and are brought to bear in particular ways in the production of social identities (Holborow, 2007). From this perspective, the data I examine in this paper can provide a particular powerful window to variability in students' discourses as it allows to trace cross-sectionally how student ideologies around bilingualism and English as an additional language change between the last year of Primary Education (6th Grade in the Spanish educational system) and university studies. Perhaps, more importantly, it allows for a comparison between the discourses of students enrolled in public state-run schools and semi-private charter schools, a distinction believed to index socio-economic differences among students as well as differences in the socio-educational projects of state (public) and private schools.

After detailing the methodology and data-set of this article, the analysis and discussion is organized in three parts. First, following a grounded theory logic (Dunne, 2011), I present students' discourses and ideologies around bilingualism, disengaging, as much as this is possible, from theoretical discussion and analysis. After this presentation, I connect the findings to the research questions and discuss in detail how the discourses and arguments I have identified in students connect to recent discussions on multilingual education, English in global contexts, students' identities and neoliberalism. Finally, I close the article reflecting on some of the possibilities of a linguistic ethnographic approach to the study of bilingual programs and students discourses.

2. Methodology

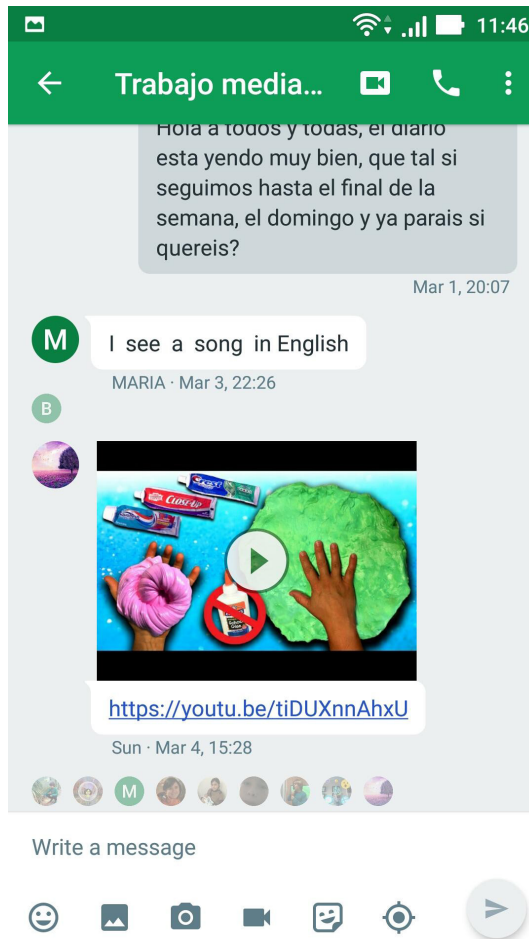
2.1. Participant and Data

Data for this article is extracted from a larger critical sociolinguistic project focused on the implementation of bilingual education / CLIL-type programs in secondary education in Castilla-La Mancha (an interior region in South-Central Spain). The broader project has involved team linguistic ethnographic fieldwork (Creese and Blackledge, 2012) between 2014-2017, conducted primarily in three secondary schools of a mid-sized city of the region. Fieldwork included participant observation in classrooms, audio and video recordings of classroom interaction, multiple interviews with teachers, language assistants, school and program administrators, parents, students and regional educational authorities in charge of the implementation of bilingual education programs in the region as well as the collection of multiple policy and school documents.

As part of the project we have also gathered information from students regarding their linguistics trajectories, multilingual experiences inside and outside school and their views regarding their participation in the CLIL-type programs of the region. We organized a series of group activities that could be conducted in the classroom and/or in collaboration with teachers and that would allow us to explore students' discourses through group interaction and conversation. We designed and implemented two types of group activities, which could be combined or implemented independently with each volunteer group and adapted to the needs and disposition of each school and individual class group:

- a. «Media/Landscape Workshops»: The focus of this activity was to gather information on students' out-of-school uses and practices around English (and other additional languages), particularly in relation to media consumption and experiences with English in their daily semiotic/language landscapes (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009). This activity involved a combination of one or two sessions with the class group, which were conducted either on-site, visiting the classroom, or by connecting by webcam with the classroom resulting in the compilation of shared media diaries (Greenberg *et al.*, 2005) with students through social media (using the platforms that students chose for the project: whatsapp, google hangout or a blogging platform). The media diaries were archived by the research team and allowed for some questions and conversation to take place via social media. Class sessions were dedicated to explain the methodology and objectives of the activity and, after media/landscape diaries were compiled, to discuss collectively the language practices documented in the diaries and/or connected to «non-academic» uses of English (and other languages). Most often these workshops were led by a researcher with little participation from teachers either in class or the social media spaces, although one teacher did join a hangout class group, and another took up the idea and adapted it as a class project that was completed without the involvement of the research team. Figure 1 below illustrates one form of media diaries.

Figure 1. Media Diary Extract (March 2017 - 6th Grade Class)



- b. «Class Group Discussions»: These activities attempted to emulate a focus group format, but within the constraints of working with whole class groups, which in Spain most often involve more than 25 students per class, and the time-constraints of one or two (at the most) class periods dedicated to the activity. In these conversations, either working in small groups or addressing the whole class, we asked students to discuss and reflect on questions regarding their experiences with English outside school, expectations with regards to English and other additional languages, the value of bilingualism, and their assessment of the bilingual educational programs they have been enrolled in. These activities were often led by researchers in teams of 2-3 members in the classroom, and could include or not the presence and collaboration from teachers. In one case, the teacher took up the script of the discussion and adapted it to a classroom «tournament game» he

regularly conducted in the class. Figure 2 illustrates the format of these group sessions:

Figure 2. Class Group Discussion (December 2017 - Year 4 ESO Class)



All participating students agreed to be part of these group activities, with the option of opting out or disengaging at any point and after written consents were obtained from legal guardians or parents to conduct and record the activity. Some sessions were audio-recorded, others were video-recorded and some photographs of the activity were taken in addition to the field-notes that were made from the sessions. Through this approach we were able to conduct twelve group sessions between 2014-2017, mostly involving ESO students (Spanish Compulsory Secondary Education, between 12-16 years of age) from three schools. The activity was also expanded to include students in their last year of primary education (6th grade, 12 years of age), a group of students in their last year of pre-university education (2º Baccalaureate, 17-18 years of age), and one session organized with university students enrolled in language degrees. In total, approximately 300 students have participated in these group activities from both public and semi-private educational settings as summarized in Table 1:

Table 1. Group Sessions Data Set (2014-2017).

Public Education Setting	Semi-Private Education Setting
(1) Media Workshop - 6th Grade Students (11-12 yrs / June 2017) (2) Media Workshop - 6th Grade Students (11-12 yrs / June 2017)	

(3) Class Group Discussion - Year 1 ESO Students (12-13 yrs / May 2016) (4) Class Group Discussion - Year 2 ESO Students (13-14 yrs / May 2016)	
(5) Class Group Discussion - Year 3 ESO Students (14-15 yrs / June 2015)	(7) Class Group Discussion - Year 3 ESO Students (14-15 yrs / November 2014) (8) Class Group Discussion - Year 3 ESO Students (14-15 yrs / May 2016)
	(9) Class Group Discussion - Year 4 ESO Students (15-16 yrs / December 2017) (10) Media Workshop - Year 4 ESO (15-16 yrs / March 2017) (11) Class Group Discussion - Year 4 ESO Students (15-16 yrs / December 2017)
(6) University Students Focus Group (+19 yrs / November 2014)	(12) Class Group Discussion - Year 2 Baccalaureate Students (17-18 yrs / November 2014)

In addition to the group activity data that will be the focus of this paper, as of June 2018 other data-sets have been collected with students, which include three individual interviews, 93 simple surveys collected by teachers, and a set of nine language biography body drawings (Busch, 2017). In this article, these other sources will be examined as complementary data.

2.2. Data Analysis

Within the research team we worked with the empirical materials of this paper through two forms of analysis. One type of analysis was collective, through team group discussions of the materials and debriefing sessions after field-work by the researchers involved in data collections (note that the twelve sessions described above were led and documented by different combinations of team members; the author of the paper was part of the fieldwork team or an individual researcher on site for several of these events, but was not present in all of them). Another type of analysis was individual and led by the author of this article. Here I examine the field-notes, transcripts, artefacts and recordings mentioned above through an inductive and cyclical process drawing from procedures developed in thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), LeCompte's (2000) approach to qualitative data analysis or grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). I examined and coded the materials and developed the themes and dimensions summarized in Figure 3 and that are presented in detail in the results of the paper – and later shared, discussed and refined the analyses drawing from discussion with rest of the research team. For the coding of this set of data, a strategy that helped constructing the themes was the identification of key terms and expressions used by participants (e.g. fluency,

native, prestige, entrepreneur, opportunity, «defend yourself», «find work» ...)². These keywords often signposted distinct arguments in students' discourses and the contrasts and variability in the language ideologies I discuss in the results. Table 2 summarizes the steps in reflexive-inductive process (cf. Smagorinski, 2008):

Table 2. Elements in the Construction of Themes / Patterns

Singpost terms	Analytical Patterns	Conceptual «Variables»	Mediating «Variables»
«Native», fluency... →	«Becomin» <i>bilingual</i>	Time Biography	Age (School year / Academic level) Type of school (Social background)
Communica- te, express... →	«Being» <i>bilingual</i>		
«No work», oppor- tunity... →	<i>Precurity</i>		
Profession, entre- preneur... →	<i>Global mobility</i>		

Given that the analysis is primarily built from collective discussions among participants, it should be noted that the model presented in Figure 3 captures the different threads that are part of the discourses around bilingualism and bilingual education present in participating students. With some provisos we can also trace how the different realizations of these discourses are tied to the two variables we can account for in this study: age (school year) and type of education (public vs. semi-private). These aspects will be discussed in the results section when the data suggests relevant associations. However, what we cannot examine or determine is how each of the different elements we discuss are configured within each student's individual linguistic biography and trajectory (cf. Busch, 2017; Busch, Jardine and Tjoutuku, n.d.), considering that the methodological arrangements of this study do not allow for this type of analysis.

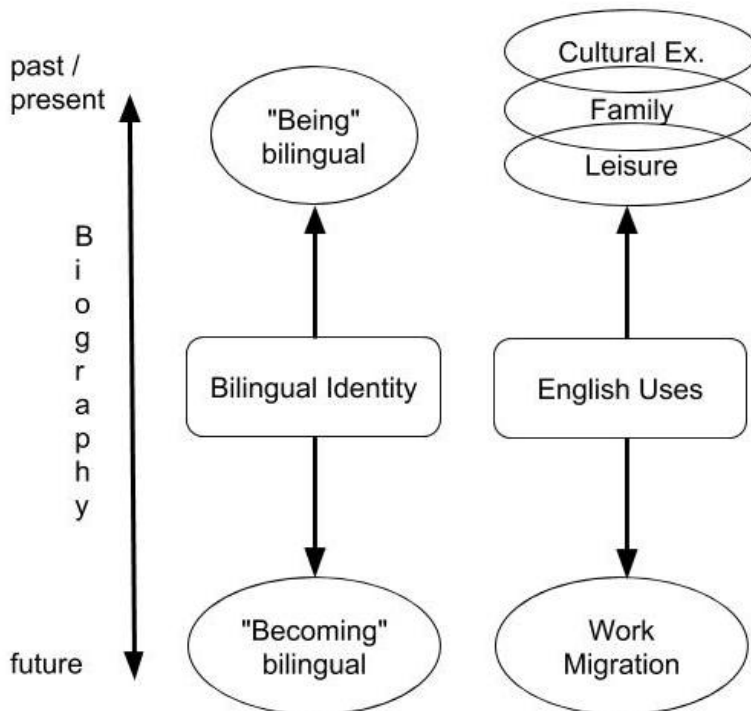
3. Results

Two major themes emerge when adolescents begin to formulate the place of English (and other languages) in their daily lives and their future trajectories beyond the strict requirements of completing coursework in a second language. A first theme is connected to adolescents' linguistic identities: if they consider themselves bilingual, and, thus, how students define «bilingualism». A second theme is connected to uses/functions of English (and other languages) in their daily lives. In both themes, most noticeably in the second, time plays a critical organizing role:

² The group discussions were conducted in the language the group of students (or class teacher) chose: English or Spanish. Thus, key terms emerged both in English and Spanish, which, interestingly, were often cognates with an easy translation: fluency - *fluidez*; native - *nativo*; prestige - *prestigio*...).

linguistic identities and practices are placed within participants' biographies, their past and current experiences and how English is projected into their future lives. The following subsections present the organization of these themes and variability across students in relation to central aspects of the themes.

Figure 3. The Structure of Student Discourses around English/Multilingualism



3.1. *Bilingual Identities: «Being» vs. «Becoming»*

The majority of students in our study have completed most of their schooling in one of the CLIL-type bilingual program implemented in Castilla-La Mancha. In this context, the first question we posed related to how students define bilingualism and how this definition is tied to how they assess their own linguistic competence and identity. The answers to these questions seem to gravitate around two alternative constructions of bilingualism and lead to relatively clear-cut answers regarding how participants define their own linguistic identities. In addition, as far as we can discern, these alternative definitions do not seem to be associated either to type of schooling or age, as both emerge in public and semi-private settings and across age groups.

A first definition of bilingualism stresses «fluency», frequently repeated among students who construe bilingualism in these terms, language competence as

associated to «mother tongue/native» speakers, and the absence of difficulties at any communicative level. As the extract below shows, this definition of bilingualism draws heavily from the terminology and vocabulary of applied linguistics and the language teaching professions. Consequently, students are able to provide an almost «textbook» definition of what it means to be bilingual:

Extract 1. Definition of Bilingualism (Year 3 ESO Student - Public School)³

S: ((reading from notes taken during the small group discussion)) I am Vicente and I think that bilingualism means ee-to be able to develop the four skills that are *listen **writing ***reading and ****speaking ((*-**** moves hand and stretches one finger with each term he enumerates)) in another language different to your mother one with fluency ((looks at teacher)) (...).

Tied to this notion of bilingualism there is a self-assessment as «not bilingual», as students cannot meet these language standards in their second language (English). Rather, students who define bilingualism in these terms see themselves as «becoming bilingual», which is understood as a lengthy process, involving effort and struggle, and which may only be achieved through experiences that go well beyond exposure and learning within a formal educational setting. A strong illustration of this strict definition of bilingualism may be found even among university students enrolled in an English language degree:

Extract 2. Nerea's Self-Portrait as «Not Bilingual» (University Student - Public University / Semi-Private Secondary Education School)

- 1N: I think that-I (don't) a bilingual person because I have to improve English or French 'cos I-mmh (.) I only think eeh in English-eh-oh-in Spanish (.) I try to (.) to think in English en-and I think that I could be (a) bilingual person
- 2 R: You think you could be a bilingual person? in the future?
- 3 N: Yeah when I think in English
- 4 S: ((group laughter))
- 5 R: Okay and dreaming?
- 6 N: Yeah
- (...)

Furthermore, as the group discussion with these older students continued, there was an almost unanimous agreement that such a language proficiency could only be achieved by living for «several years» in another country with intense exposure to the second language on a daily basis.

³ The conversation is first transcribed in the original language and then translated into English if necessary. The transcription adopts a simplified version of the conventions developed in Conversation Analysis (ten Have, 1999).

In contrast to this view of bilingualism, some students do consider themselves currently bilingual and operationalize the definition of bilingualism and their language identities in other terms. From this perspective, «communication» emerges as the key anchor term: being bilingual means being able to understand and speak to other people in a second language, study and make progress in that second language, being able to travel and learn about other cultures and «do the things» one could do in their first language. Consequently, this definition also problematizes the notion of fluency and the supposed competences speakers have even in their «first» language:

Extract 3. Group Definition of Bilingualism (Year 3 ESO Students - Semi-Private School)

- 1 S1: (...) We are thinking we are bilinguals but we don't **speak** English perfectly eh: coz' like in Spanish we will-we never speak the language mh: perfectly (.) that's all
- 2 R: So: in-in-there's things that you can **do** in Spanish that you cannot do in English? or that you cannot do so well?
- 3 S1: No that you won't **speak**-you won't **speak** a language perfectly (.) yeah
- 4 R: Okay but a-are there things that you can **do** in Spanish that you cannot do in English?
- 5 S1: mmnn ((negating head movement))-
- 6 R: -or more or less you can **do** the same things in English as in Spanish
- 7 S: Yes* ((*several in the small group of students respond at the same time))
- 8 R: Yeah all of you? ((the researcher turns to the whole class))
- 9 S: Yes* ((*some students in the class answer together))
- 10 R: You can **do** the same things in English as in Spanish?
- 11 S: [Yes*
- 12 S: [More or less* ((*practically the whole class answers one of these two audible responses))
- (...)

Extract 3 provides a good example of this second position. The class had been working in small groups on the question «do you think you are bilingual?». After the small group discussion they began to share their responses and thoughts with the research team and the rest of the class. All groups tended to respond that they consider themselves bilingual as illustrated in the extract above, which captures the exchange between the small group, one researcher and then the whole class. Student 1 (S1) provides an answer as spokesperson of the small group: they consider themselves bilingual and stress how «perfect competence» is something that cannot be achieved even in their first language (Spanish) (line 1). This leads to a question by the researcher in which the student's answer is somewhat reformulated. There are two relevant aspects in this reformulation worth pointing out. First, the generic notion of competence is reformulated from «speaking» (the student's term, line 1 and line

3) to «doing» (the researcher's term, used in the first reformulation and subsequent recyclings of the question, lines 2, 4, 6 and 10). Second, the question introduces a comparative element, construed as an asymmetry, between Spanish and English, while the original answer by the students stressed how incomplete competence in L1 and L2 is a shared feature among students. This reformulation of the question is met with a counter response by the first student, in which the initial notion of competence is restated (line 3), arguably a dispreferred second part (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2013) in adult researcher – adolescent student interaction. This position is then restated by the small group (line 7) and eventually the whole class (lines 9, 11 and 12) after the researcher recycles her question to each alternative recipient.

3.2. *English in Adolescent Lives*

As learning English (or other additional languages) is incorporated into participants' lives, questions regarding when, how and why English is used in daily life – outside the requirements of the bilingual education program – emerge as relevant. A central organizer for talk around these questions is the life-course of participants: how engagement with English is present in their current (or past) daily lives and how it is projected into their future (see below). Within this biographical mapping diverse issues emerge. In addition, the connections between student discourses and type of schooling emerge more clearly in the life-courses they present.

Beginning with the presence of English in students' out-of-school lives, the limited survey data we have (in total 93 media questionnaires from students between year 6 of primary education and year 4 ESO) suggests that around 11 years of age, 44% of the students mainly listen to English-language music and watch television series – as well as other online media – in English (with Spanish subtitles when available). As students progress into secondary education and their teenage years the numbers increase, and by 14-15 years of age, about 63% of students consume their media primarily in English. At this level, differences between schools do not seem that significant. Both younger and older students as well as students enrolled in public and semi-private schools who contributed to the media diaries reported watching, consuming and sometimes producing (via Youtube videos, memes, etc.) media in English or in which English language was present.

Students' explanations suggest that by consuming English-language media in this way they are, on the one hand, aligning with what is seen as a common practice in other European countries, where English-language television or movies are not translated, and, on the other hand, are engaged in contemporary digital and transmedia consumption of popular culture. Music consumption illustrates well these points. The adolescents we have surveyed and who have participated in the group discussions, unsurprisingly, single-out music as the most important media they consume. The genres and artists students listen to follow the general trends of Spanish and European adolescents: they follow primarily Anglo/English-speaking artists (e.g. *Katy Perry*, *Coldplay*) as well as Spanish artists (e.g. *Melendi*, *Mago de Oz*). Many adolescents also mention *reggaeton*, now a globally popular music style that: (a) is mainly performed in Latin American varieties of Spanish; and (b) adolescents themselves identify as a music genre that borrows key words from

English (e.g. «babies», «baby»). In addition, consuming and enjoying pop music in English is mainly a digital and multimodal experience given the fact that music is consumed via Youtube videos, and, in addition to this, the videos are one way through which adolescents access the lyrics of the songs they enjoy.

Extract 4. English and Media (Year 3 ESO Students - Semi-Private School)

(...)

1R: What about here? What do you do to-to practice your English? You practice everyday outside school? (...)

2 S1: we put the television in English

3 R: okay, [you do that often?

4 S2: [and we listen to music

5 R: you listen to music?=
6 S2: =in English

7 R: how often do you put-do you watch films in English? (.) or TV series? or Youtube? or-

8 S3: -Youtube

9: R: Youtube? and what-what do you use-what do you watch in Youtube what's your favorite?

10 S3: ehh

11 S2: the lyrics (of songs)

12 R: oh-of songs?

13 S3: yes

(...)

Older students generally acknowledge that English is the dominant language in digital media, social media platforms and the internet. This assessment is connected both to their own digital leisure practices and to the quantity (and, perhaps, quality) of the resources they can find in English connected to their studies. Also, in addition to a more receptive stance towards English in digital media, some students also point out how English allows them to interact and participate in other digital spaces. This emerges in a number of group conversations with secondary school students, but it is best illustrated in the individual interview with a primary education student who is an active gamer and had already starting posting Youtube videos on video-games and other topics.

Extract 5. English Digital Media Interactions (Alberto - Year 6 Primary Education - Public School)

1AL: (...) Sí, la verdad, tengo algún amigo así, por ejemplo tengo muchos amigos así hh en un juego llamado XXX

Yes, really, I have some friends like that, for example I have many friends like that from a game called XXX

2R: [uhm uh] =

3AL: = Online

online

4R: Uhm uh

5AL: Pues tengo muchos amigos ahí, y como es un juego inglés
Well I have many friends there, and as it's a game in English

6R: Uhm uh

7AL: Y como es en inglés o sea claro está hh XXX pero, pues sí, hablo mucho inglés (...) bueno ahora ya no tanto porque, como ahora, se ha se ha pasado muy XXX hay muchos españoles que juegan y ya: muchos hablan en español allí

And as its in English so I mean XXX but, so yes, I talk a lot in English (...) well not so much now because, since now, its XXX there are lots of Spaniards who play :and now many speak Spanish there

8R: O sea que este es un juego que llevas tiempo haciendo, y:: cuando empezaste a hablar en inglés

So this is a game you have been doing for a while and when you started talking in English

9AL: Sí, algún, bueno muchos amigos, que me he encontrado ha sido porque, vamos, siempre cuando empiezo una partida, digo «hola» por si hay algún español (.7) y luego: digo «hello» (...) a los ingleses

Yes, some, well many friends I've found have been because, well, when I start a game, I say «hola» in case there are Spaniards (.7) and the:n I say «hello» (...) to the English

Beyond these generally shared experiences, there are other aspects of students' out-of-school lives that point towards divergences among students. One area where differences emerge is in relation to the role of parents and family. Unless one of their parents was an English teacher, adolescents in public schools do not report a family language policy (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008) in which their parents, as speakers of English as a second language, attempted to maintain conversations in English with them. In contrast, students in semi-private schools report attempts in their families to use English as the language of daily family communication or, more broadly, an active engagement of all family members (siblings and parents) with learning and practicing additional languages.

Extract 6. English and Family Interaction (Year 3 ESO Students - Semi-Private School)

((A group of students is discussing how they use bilingualism outside school in a small group conversation))

S1: (...) pero mi padre me habla en inglés

my father talks to me in English

S2: we practice eeh English outside school eeh for example ehh with our parents sometimes or my brothers when I don't under-

S1: -XXXX XXX speak in English with my parents

S3: my father XXXX has a French teacher and he speaks to me in French and I talk to her-to him in French (.) in my house (...)

Parental support and socio-economic differences are also connected to the type of «cultural and exchange experiences» that students are able to enjoy. All the bilingual programs in the schools under study include the opportunity to participate in an educational exchange experience in another English-speaking country (and French-speaking in the case of schools that also have a program for an additional foreign language). Across schools, students who have participated in these experiences single them out as extraordinary opportunities to immerse in other cultures and use English to extend their life and cultural experiences (cf. Menard-Warwick, 2019). For many students in public schools, this one week travel experiences organized through their school is their main foreign travel and language/culture immersion experience. In contrast, some students in semi-private schools discuss more extended experiences in other countries. To begin, a minority of students in semi-private schools (but none in public schools) report life experiences living abroad for several months or years due to family work (usually at a professional level working in international organizations or corporations). More central to our discussion, a number of students in semi-private schools discuss how regular participation in summer or year-long exchanges and residential programs – involving substantial costs – have contributed to their language skills and cultural competencies.

Extract 7. Marina's Living Abroad Experience (Year 2 Baccalaureate Group - Semi-Private School)

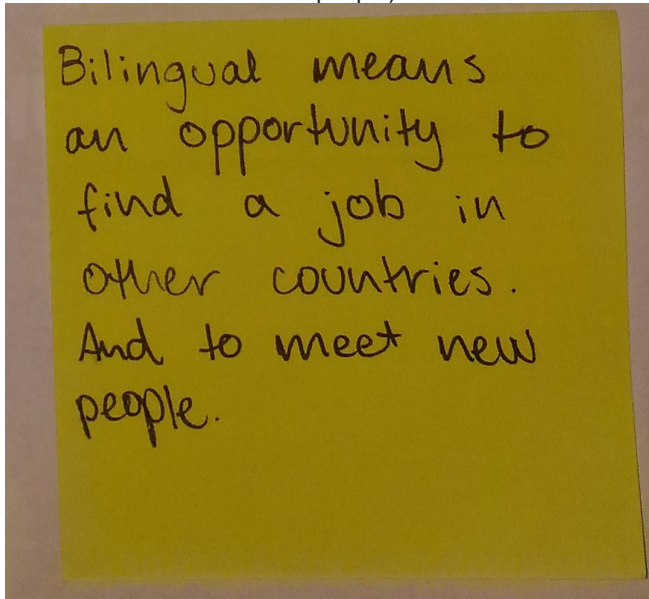
Marina: (...) I also have experience of like going on my own to Ireland to study second-and third year and like I went on my own I didn't have-like I didn't have any base of English I understand something, but like I didn't manage myself as good-as like XXX English people can come here like we have speak in Spanish and English and we can manage=so I tried to look for myself and go to the post (and the place where I live) and everything and the three years I've been there it's was like a really great experience and like I (.) I tell people to do it because it's a (very good) experience that is really good and (helpful) for you and XXX so like the future and managing yourself now and English is the most important language so everyone's speaking it so it was really good (...)

In short, even though, as we saw above, students hold different definitions of what it means to be bilingual and their own position within this definition, these same students report being engaged in communicative practices and life experiences in which English and using English play a role. A part of these practices are very much tied to their present lives, leisure activities and interests as adolescents. However, a central feature of the discourses around bilingualism is how English is projected into students' future biographies as well as in educational and labor trajectories. As I show in the next section, this is an aspect in which we find contrasts among students, which can be connected to their socio-economic background.

3.3. English in Projected Life-Courses

When students are asked to discuss how English or other languages will play a role in their future lives, their answers gravitate around two themes that are well condensed in the written statements captured in Figure 4: (a) future work and (b) more socialization opportunities.

Figure 4. Post-it with a definition of bilingualism (Year 4 ESO Students, Semi-Private School). (Text: Bilingual means an opportunity to find a job in other countries. And to meet new people)



While these two themes point towards different dimensions of social life and students' future trajectories, there is a common feature worth pointing out: English always emerges as the global lingua franca (Canagarajah, 2007). This is a taken-for-granted assumption in students' discussions, which is easily made explicit if they are asked about it and plays out in the type of statement captured in Figure 4. This particular definition of bilingualism and what it affords, in different versions of the same idea, is shared among students across age groups and types of school, encapsulating some of the discursive ellipses that are built into how English is construed. First, more obviously and unexpectedly, given the educational program in which students are enrolled, bilingualism means combining two languages: Spanish and English. Second, when students refer to future «work opportunities» they always speak generically referring to «other countries», «away», «outside Spain», etc., rather than mentioning destinations that might be considered English speaking countries. In fact, this is a consistent pattern: when students talk about language immersion experiences during their schooling to improve their language skills (e.g. Extract 7), they always specify particular English speaking destinations (most often Ireland and the USA), but when students talk about future work, they are very generic in relation

to the destination as they have a shared understanding that English is the language that is «spoken everywhere». Third, this delocalization of English also extends to how bilingualism/learning English is connected to broader socialization opportunities. As already discussed above, students extend their social media relations through English and have access to new social experiences, including friendships, in which English is often the shared means of communication among peers who do not have English as their first language. For example, students in one class that participated in an exchange program with a French school acknowledged that a part of the social media interactions they had with their French peers took place in English.

However, in this section, I want to specifically focus on how future labor trajectories emerge in students' discourses. As mentioned above, there is a shared agreement on the crucial role that English (and additional languages) will play in their employment opportunities. There is also a shared consensus that these work opportunities will materialize outside Spain, or specifically the mid-sized Spanish city in which the data was collected. Yet, beyond these common elements there are subtle differences in how work-related mobility is construed. In addition, these differences are connected to the type of school students attend – and, as the broader ethnographic data shows, the social and educational ideologies made visible in each school [e.g. Relaño-Pastor and Fernández-Barreda (2019)].

For students in public schools or who have followed a public education trajectory, seeking employment outside of Spain and learning English to be able to do so is connected to precarity (Bright and Smyth, 2016) and the fragile job market that emerged from the economic recession. This perspective is probably stated more clearly by university students who are closer to entering the labor market and have already made degree choices connected to their expectations:

Extract 8. English in an precarious job market (University Students Focus Group)

(...)

1 S1: maybe a few years ago it wasn't so important but now that e:h is difficult to find a job (.) a person who is able to speak in English e:h can achieve (2) easier e:h his or her objective than a person who doesn't know English

2 R: mh-hh so yourselves you think you will find a job more easily than any other people who can't speak English?

3 S1: hope so

4 S: ((group laughter))

5 S2: they say that the languages are the future↑ (.) that they open a lot of jobs for us↓

(...)

This brief explanation contains some of the key elements of this perspective. First, there is an opposition between two historical moments in relation to work: a period in the past where access to jobs – perhaps especially for university graduates – was easier and the current moment in which this is very complicated – particularly in Spain (line 1). Second, in this context, English and other additional languages seem to be construed metaphorically as a «vaccine», as a skill that will generically make these students more competitive in the labor market – noticeably, these university students speak generically about «jobs» (line 1 and line 5) rather than specific positions or professional fields that might be connected to their degrees and training (cf. Dovemark and Beach, 2016).

In contrast, among students in semi-private schools the interconnection between English and working abroad is intertwined with specific future professional interests and vocations. In this portrait references to precarity or the temporal shifts in the labor market are omitted and the focus is on the professional and life opportunities that can be pursued by mastering English. Also, students mention specific professional fields (e.g. engineering, robotics, surgery) in which English is seen as critically necessary for professional communication and training – rather than making generic references to «jobs». Alternatively, other students mention the labor niche («multinational corporations») that perhaps envisions best this perspective and the persona («entrepreneur») that is associated with a mobile/global English speaker:

Extract 9. English and global opportunities (Year 4 ESO Students - Semi-Private School)

(...)

S1: and if you are an entrepreneur or if want to work in a: multinational company they are only looking for people who know more than one language (.) because they have to get to mainly the centra:l the central place of the company

R: mh-hh

S1: and they want to sell better things internationally they have to know more languages

(...)

4. Discussion: How do Student Discourses Connect to Critical Discussions on Neoliberalism, English and Schooling?

The data I presented shows how adolescent and late adolescent Spanish students enrolled in bilingual education programs construe bilingualism and English in their out of school daily lives and future trajectories. Returning to the opening questions of the article: how do these language ideologies connect to the neoliberal discourses on education and language learning that underpin the educational policies and educational programs in which the students participate? In this section, the article will try to respond to this question by interpreting students' discourses within the body of critical work developed over the past few years around the place of

language (and English) in social and economic late modernity. From the start I should note that this discussion develops in the context of two provisos: (a) as advanced in the introduction, the identification between the discourses and language ideologies presented above and the tenets of neoliberalism may be established regardless of whether participants (i.e. adolescents) are aware of this connection; (b) neoliberalism as an economic, social and political project does not univocally promote or endorse particular articulations of bilingualism or language learning; rather, as the critical literature discussed here and the data suggest, an array of conceptions can be resituated as part of the social identities and linguistic practices that have a place within a wider hegemonic neoliberal social order (Althusser, 1988; Holborow, 2007).

To begin, adolescents see English and the additional languages they are learning through their schooling as commodities (Heller, 2003, 2010), as resources they will be able (or are already able) to exchange for enhanced work opportunities, more social experiences or access to information. More fundamentally, in response to critiques to a commodified version of language (Block, 2014), students see the acquisition of English (and other L2 languages) as the product of their intense labor (i.e. study, accumulated purposeful experiences, effort over time, etc.). In fact, as I discuss immediately below, regardless of how students define bilingual competence, the acquisition of a second language is seen as a complex process that stratifies students into different educational and linguistic streams during their schooling. Arguably, this account of the learning process places English/L2 competence somewhere between a «hard» or a «soft» skill (cf. Urciuoli, 2008) or, at the very least, invites to rethink the usual view of language and communication skills as «soft skills». More importantly, as a hard-earned commodity and skill, English is connected by students to their future lives and labor trajectories within narratives in which the different faces of the current socio-economic order are present (see below).

The most stringent version of this learning process resonates with an idealization of the native speaker (cf. Cioè-Peña, Moore and Martín-Rojo, 2016; Phillipson, 2011), an idealization that the broader ethnographic project suggests is promoted and endorsed by the schools we have studied (Relaño-Pastor and Fernández-Barreda, 2019), and an ideological construction of competence (Kataoka, Ikeda and Besnier, 2013), in which first and second language skills must overlap for a person to be described as bilingual. However, based on the diverse views expressed by the participating students, this is only partially true. First, even students who hold this maximalist view of bilingual competence and bilingual identity consider they can (and hope to) become bilingual (Extract 2), but this path to bilingualism will not necessarily take place through intense early exposure or contact mainly with native teachers – that is, what Phillipson (2011) identifies as fallacies associated to this definition of bilingualism. Second, there is an alternative definition of bilingualism among students in which communicative effectiveness (Extract 3) plays a key role and acknowledges different degrees of mastery over the languages that conform the repertoire of a bilingual person. This perspective is aligned with a portrait of adolescents as emergent cosmopolitans (cf. De Costa, 2014) who use English to participate in global popular culture flows (including audiovisual media, music, social media and digital gaming). These adolescents see English as a *Lingua Franca* (Canagarajah, 2007) mainly used to communicate now and in the future with other

speakers for whom English is not their first language. Thus, connect the process of learning English to opportunities to broaden social and cultural experiences (Gao and Park, 2015; Menard-Warwick, 2019). It could be argued that the latter perspective on bilingual competence might have a better fit with the multilingual project of the European Union / Council of Europe, but, as Flores (2013) has pointed out, this alternative can also be read as part of a wider neoliberal project.

However, from my perspective, the diversity in participants' discourses seems to converge more explicitly with the dynamics of a neoliberal regime in how students construe their future mobile lives. Many students contemplate working outside Spain as part of their future professional trajectories – and it is in relation to this aspect where the commodification of their second language learning efforts become clearer. However, students' arguments reproduce what can be seen as the two sides of the same neoliberal socio-economic order, especially as reconstructed since the economic recession that began around 2008. Some students intertwine English and bilingualism with upward professional mobility and embrace the ideologies and identities associated to the neoliberal construction of the entrepreneur (Holborow, 2015), in which mobility is conceived both as opportunity for socio-economic success and the fulfilment of a life project. Other students are aware of the deteriorated labor market in Spain and see migration to other contexts (Feixa and Rubio, 2017) as an escape from precarity, which is only viable through the extended language skills they struggle to master. As previously stated, these differing accounts emerge in different types of schools (private/semi-private vs. public) and as much as type of school can be taken as a proxy for socio-economic differences among students, it seems that how English and bilingualism are intertwined with future work is connected to the social origin of students.

In short, the language ideologies around bilingualism, learning English as an additional language and bilingual education we have documented show how students progressively appropriate and reproduce the wider socio-educational ideologies that underpin the linguistic educational programs in which they participate. The data collection design also allowed for some comparisons and initial hypothesis. A first hypothesis addressed changes in relation to the age of students. Here we find some transformations in the arguments and issues that become relevant, which, rather than strictly connected to chronological age, I would argue that they become more visible as students confront key transitions in their schooling: from secondary education to higher education, from higher education to the job market and even between different linguistic programs within schools. A second hypothesis was connected to type of school (public vs. semi-private) as a proxy for both differences in students' socio-cultural (class and ethnic) backgrounds and pedagogical arrangements. Here I would argue the differences are visible in the types of discourses that become visible in each setting and which, as the wider ethnographic data shows, are closely tied to the institutional discourses and practices of each school (Relaño-Pastor, 2018; Relaño-Pastor and Fernández-Barreda, 2019).

5. Conclusions

To close the paper I would like to point out some methodological implications connected to the data presented in this paper. The group activity / focus group approach reported in this paper emerged both in response to the demands and constraints of the schools that participated in the project and the difficulties we encountered to secure individual interviews with students. This is the candid account of the process and we acknowledge that working at this collective level limits the possibilities of conducting certain types of analysis. As I have discussed throughout the paper, it is particularly difficult to: (a) work from precise biographical / demographic data from participants; (b) to reconstruct how each of the threads and arguments we have identified, may intertwine globally in the discourse of individual participants. Having said this, there are potentials to our approach that might be worthwhile pointing out. The design of whole class activities and discussion (working with the «natural groupings» of the school) brings to the forefront of the analysis the collective and co-constructed – at the very least between student participants and researchers- nature of discourse. This co-construction involves various layers, including the micro-dynamics of interaction (Potter and Hepburn, 2005) and how these interconnect with the institutional and social order of the sites under study (Heller and Martin-Jones, 2001). From my perspective, the combination of this approach to student discourses and ethnographic fieldwork is what makes the power of a linguistic ethnographic approach clear. Extended participant observation in the different schools, interviews and conversation with various social actors from these schools and the analysis of multiple documents, among other sources, allows interpreting with some confidence the discourses we elicited from students in the context of the language programs and socio-economic and educational dynamics in which these programs are inserted.

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